



# NEWS RELEASE

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## **EMERGENCY WEATHER RADIO TRANSMITTER DEDICATION RURAL DEVELOPMENT TEAMS WITH NOAA TO BRING EARLY WARNING SYSTEM TO FOUR COUNTIES**

MARIANNA, FL, May 18, 2004 – Thousands of people die or lose property annually due to hazards, disasters or emergencies. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) operates an all hazard early warning system that broadcasts National Weather Service warnings, and alerts people in areas covered by its transmission, of approaching dangerous weather and other emergencies. Unfortunately, many rural areas do not have NOAA Weather Radio coverage.

USDA Rural Development and NOAA have teamed up to bring an early warning system that will provide NOAA weather radio coverage to Jackson, Gadsen, Liberty, Calhoun and surrounding counties. USDA awarded \$79,826 in grant funding toward the installation of a 1000 watt dual transmitter, building and antenna in the Jackson County town of Sneads.

The USDA grant was supplemented by \$190,500 in matching funds by the Jackson County Offices of Emergency Management and Community Development, Gadsden County Sheriff's Office Division of Emergency Management, and Liberty County Emergency Management, as well as a back-up power generator and tower rental provided by the Florida Department of Transportation.

"This Administration believes that continued infrastructure investment is critical to the well being and safety of rural America," said Rural Development State Director Charles W. Clemons, Sr., at today's dedication ceremony. "It is important that rural communities, such as those in Jackson, Gadsen, Liberty and Calhoun counties, have the necessary tools and information available to protect lives and property against hazards and to address disasters or emergencies that threaten public safety."

Rural Development is the lead Federal entity for rural development needs and administers financial and technical assistance through Rural Housing Programs, Rural Business-Cooperative Programs and Rural Utilities Programs. USDA Rural Development's mission is to deliver programs in a way that will support increasing economic opportunity and improve the quality of life of rural residents. As a venture capital entity, Rural Development provides equity and technical assistance to finance and foster growth in homeownership, business development, and critical community and technology infrastructure. Further information on USDA Rural Development can be obtained by contacting any USDA Service Center or by visiting USDA's web site at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/fl>

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